Mega-Event Mobilities

A Critical Analysis

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Introduction

Exposing sports mega-events through a mobilities lens

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Setting the scene

Mobile mega-events such as the Olympic Games or the FIFA World Cup help to put the organising cities on a global stage and to compete with other so-called global cities. Categorising cities in terms of their significance in global finance and trade is relatively easy (cf. Sassen, 1991). The (perceived) hierarchy of importance becomes more blurred, and thus more contested, when other, qualitative indicators are taken into consideration.[1] Regardless of how city rankings are calculated, scoring high on them is considered beneficial and desirable by authorities, business elites and citizens alike. Unsurprisingly, annual global city rankings generally attract extensive media coverage (mainly when the classification is favourable) and are a popular topic of discussion (especially when the rank is less than expected). Importantly, 'world-cityness is not determined by a city's location in a pre-existing structure, but needs to be performed and worked at in a multiplicity of sites' (Doel & Hubbard, 2002, p. 365; emphasis added). In other words, despite the apparent metric objectivity of city rankings, a global city is best thought of as 'a social construct, not as a place or an object consisting of essential properties that can be readily measured outside the process of making meaning' (Smith, 1998, p. 485).

Attracting fixed capital investment (corporate headquarters, production facilities, downtown skyscrapers) and circulating capital (transportation, tourism, cultural events) through the branding of a translocal 'identity' has become a nearly universal strategy (Darel, 2004, p. 572). Many cities see large-scale urban (re)development projects, so-called urban mega-projects, as strategic tools to enhance their global competitiveness for (scarce) mobile resources, markets, opportunities and attention. In most cases, not only are both the public sector and the private sector involved in the development process, but also other local as well as transnational stakeholders play a significant role. The same is true for mega-events, which are often coupled to mega-projects (Hiller, this volume) and are seen as catalysts for the environmental, social, economic and cultural regeneration of urban areas (e.g. the 1992 Barcelona or 2012 London Olympic Games). Organising large-scale events is thus part of a deliberate strategy to promote economic growth and to put places 'on the global agenda' (Andranovich, this volume), an approach that is celebrated by some but contested by others (Timms, this volume).

Acknowledging the importance of mega-events for cities, regions and countries with global aspirations, this book explores, from a critical perspective, the mobilities involved in their 'construction'. Construction is a general term referring to the 'building' of (typically large) objects, systems, processes or organisations, be they material or intangible. We are particularly interested in construction as a noun – namely 'how' a mega-event is given shape and what the nature and method of its structures (infrastructure, organisational structures, etc.) are. This involves paying attention to discursive strategies and the underlying imaginaries that inspire the organisation and media coverage of mega-events (Salazar & Jayaram, 2016). As Orvar Löfgren (2014, p. 259) notes, 'Experiences may be fleeting or ephemeral phenomena, but the tool chests are full of hardware words from the construction trade: *building* a brand, *producing* an event, *crafting* an aura, *constructing* a flair of place or *staging* a mood' (original emphasis). Our interest here lies not so much in the mega-events themselves but in the role their mobile 'construction' (before, during and after the actual event) plays in managing identities, images and reputations.[2] The focus is particularly on the tension between the various mobilities and immobilities that are implied in the complex process of constructing a mega-event.

Mega-what?

A mega-event refers to an 'extra-ordinary', large-scale, itinerant event of fixed duration. Mega-events vary in type and organisation and are normally subject to a bidding process by potential hosts. There are different 'orders' of mega-event according to size, scope and reach, their geographical location and appeal. Martin Müller (2015c) proposes four constitutive dimensions: visitor attractiveness, mediated reach (via broadcasting), costs and transformative impact (on both the built environment and the population). The two best-known examples are world's fairs (expos) and global sport events (particularly the Olympic Games and the FIFA World Cup, although some editions of regional sports events, such as the UEFA European Championship and the Asian Games, also qualify).[3] Many mega-events have explicitly ideological aspirations and potentially hegemonic impacts (Roche, 2000; Rojek, 2013). They become larger and larger as host cities and countries pursue broad transformational agendas with them (Tzanelli, this volume). As 'spectaculars', they 'connect cities and societies in global discourses and shared practices' (Short, 2012, p. 188). They are accompanied by a 'rhetoric of worldwide competition, nationalist pride and one-upmanship between event organisers' (Müller & Pickles, 2015, p. 121).

Mega-events have had an enduring mass popularity since their creation in the late nineteenth century (Roche, 2000). Interest in them appears to be even greater now than it was back then. Nowadays, countries are using world expositions, for example, as a platform to improve their national image through their pavilions. At a time in which a strong national image is seen as a key asset, pavilions have become real advertising campaigns, and the Expo a vehicle for 'nation branding' (Anholt, 2007).[4] Mega-events are 'important symbolic, economic, and political

elements in the orientation of nations to stake their place in global society' (Horne, 2015, p. 466). Governments tend to use them 'as a form of "soft power" or public diplomacy to showcase the nation as a global player and to highlight the robustness of its infrastructure and business acumen' (Maguire, 2011, p. 690).[5] However, expectations that a sports event can improve the image of a country are overrated (Manzenreiter, 2010). In addition, they also seek to address 'internal issues and concerns – nation-building, economic regeneration and fostering social capital' (Maguire, 2011, p. 690). According to Maurice Roche (2000), mega-events help to develop an 'international public culture'. In the new balance of power between cities and states, mega-events reflect 'not only a "world of nations" but also a "world of cities" (of localities and different identities) together with versions of a "one world" (an evolving singular and interconnected "global society") world view' (Roche, 2000, p. 27).

Kenneth Roberts (2004) argues that the three main 'engines' driving the evolution of mega-events are (1) government leisure policies, (2) the expansion of tourism and (3) the globalisation of the media. One could add here the role of multinational corporations (particularly in their role as sponsors). It is important to emphasise that mega-events are as much a product of cultural construction as a cultural location where social engineering (influencing society on a large scale) is occurring (Rojek, 2013).[6] Hosting a mega-event implies a massive logistical operation, involving years of detailed planning and co-ordination before, during and after the event. All of this is done in the hope that it will 'move' people, objects and ideas on various fronts – the 'mobilities' that inspire the focus of this volume. But why would one believe mega-events could have such an effect?

Images, imaginaries, imagineering

As Anne-Marie Broudehoux (2007) points out, French intellectuals such as Guy Debord (1970) and Jean Baudrillard (1998[1970]) had anticipated already in the 1960s how the image, the spectacle and their consumption would dominate contemporary society.[7] David Harvey (1989) refers to the use of 'urban spectacle' in particular as one of the main products of postmodern society and a key means by which cities express their personality, enhance their status and advertise their position on the global stage. In the words of Broudehoux (2007, p. 383),

> [U]rban imaging strategies have become key generators of symbolic capital, helping cities market and advertise themselves as they enter the global competition for visitors and capital. Urban imagineers and city marketers have thus learned to refashion the urban landscape for visual consumption, capitalizing upon spectacular architectural images and alluring urban iconography in the hope of producing real economic value.

The spectacle, broadly defined, is believed by policymakers and scholars alike to be so vital to urban economies that one of the most effective ways for cities to enhance their global 'image' is by staging mega-events (Andranovich, this

volume; Carter, this volume). The construction of a mega-event indeed starts with an imaginary, often a utopian idea. This is then translated into a concrete proposal, which needs to be approved (by both the financer and official instances), before it can be properly planned and designed, procured and built. Nations from around the world are competing to host mega-events because countries and cities alike perceive such events as potential re-imaging opportunities (Hiller, 2006). Investments in infrastructure are tightly linked with symbolic communication in terms of branding and 'imagineering', 'a political as well as economic project in which particular actors, classes and coalitions pursue their own visions of global status and connectivity' (Darel, 2004, p. 573).[8] In the case of mega-events, imagineering refers specifically to the conscious manipulation and promotion of the city, region or even country and their global image (Rutheiser, 1996).

With much of global culture portrayed in the media, events have become highly sought-after commodities as countries move towards 'event-driven economies' (Nauright, 2004). Mega-events involve the representation, branding and imagineering of cities, regions or countries for local-to-global consumption under the legitimation of transnational competitiveness (Cornelissen, 2010). Particularly for developing nations, mega-events can be integral to redefining a country's global status and sociopolitical composition (Cornelissen, 2010; Gruneau & Horne, 2016; Tzanelli, 2015). Mega-events offer middle-income countries the opportunity to (re)shape how they are perceived throughout the world in a way that is not at stake for high-income countries (Tomlinson et al., 2011).

Hosting high-profile mega-events is imagined to boost global visibility not only by promoting the image of the host environment as a vibrant and dynamic place (Tzanelli, this volume) but also by acting, locally, as a catalyst for development and a way to legitimise large-scale transformations, giving local governments the license to reprioritise the urban agenda without the public scrutiny they normally receive. According to Müller,

> the spectacular character of mega-events grips people and fires their imaginations, often sidelining rational deliberations about an event's benefits and costs, especially during the bidding phase. The fantasies attached to these events often turn out to be illusory the closer the event draws, but then it is too late for second thoughts.
>
> (2015b, p. 7)

The positive image that events are believed to portray to the public, and the media exposure they offer, probably explains the lengths to which organisers and authorities will go to host mega-events (and this despite the corruption scandals in which organising bodies, such as FIFA or IOC, have been involved in). Re-imaging or rebranding strategies entail the production of very particular images for consumption by global audiences of potential investors, visitors or mobile workers (Carter, this volume). The intense media coverage of these events offers an opportunity to promote a distinctive image of the city to a global audience that can, it is hoped, consolidate its position within the global hierarchy of cities (Hiller, 2006).

Improving the 'image' and building a country or city brand is one of the central goals of many mega-event hosts today (Müller, 2015c). More than transmitting information, the media are instrumental in creating a celebratory atmosphere and emotional attachment to mega-events, turning them into the spectacles they are (Dayan & Katz, 1992; Rojek, 2013). The role of imaginaries in media events is certainly something that merits more scholarly attention (Van den Broucke et al., this volume).

Mega-events thus have tremendous significance as a symbolic platform for 'exposure'.[9] As such, they are major sites and sources of cultural imagination (Palmer, 1998). They become crucibles in which the nature of society and alternative social constructions are explored (Handelman, 1990). In other words, (outward-oriented) place promotion is combined with (inner-oriented) identity construction. Imaginaries of place are often created for external audiences, but have a dualistic objective of manipulating, forcefully and subconsciously, the imaginings of the local population to bring them in line with the dominant discourses and policies (Hiller, this volume). Host nations thus use mega-events to change their global image; to signal their 'graduation' or 'arrival' on the global stage; or to achieve certain domestic or foreign policy objectives (Giulianotti et al., 2015). At the same time, stakeholders objecting to these objectives and groups advocating for indirectly related or even totally unrelated issues benefit from the media attention surrounding mega-events to promote their own agendas (Timms, this volume).

There are numerous and diverse stakeholders involved in the process who wish to create (counter-)images and imaginaries that are more desirable and they utilise different approaches to achieve success (Hiller, 2012). These stakeholders often form growth coalitions or regimes, which are groups of influential locals who have a stake (political, economic, social, etc.) in the creation of a certain image or project. Politicians and interest groups alike mobilise to represent mega-events as vital to economic development and as engines of growth, infrastructural modernisation and shaping a better image, for all (Müller & Pickles, 2015). Whose narratives predominate and by which causes they prevail are generally the results of compound processes of social and political negotiation and intense if often concealed contestation (Cornelissen, 2010, p. 3013).

Imaginaries can be defined as socially transmitted representational assemblages that interact with people's personal imaginings and that are used as meaning-making and world-shaping devices (Salazar, 2012). They not only steer the construction of mega-events; the way in which imaginaries become detectable in images and discourses is one of the most sought-after outcomes of mega-events (Andranovich, this volume).[10] Despite the official belief in their 'image value', however, there is little evidence of mega-events making a significant and long-term difference. Whether it be 'timeless natives' or an in-group-focused history, opening and closing ceremonies, for instance, have done little to alter pre-existing stereotypes about places and peoples (Nauright, 2004). Using mega-events to improve a place's image appears promising, but the full estimation of such a strategy is closely related to the appreciation of its impact on the receiving people's

previous knowledge, perceptions, opinions and prejudices. In addition, there can be transfer of negative elements and lack of media control (Bodet & Lacassagne, 2012). Media coverage, for example, continues to script the world's 'periphery' into positions of marginality, dependency and perpetual underdevelopment. Global viewers will access different image streams and hence have disparate perceptions of any given mega-event. Moreover, there often are alternative and sometimes conflicting accounts (Timms, this volume).

While existing research has given considerable attention to the production of images of place through mega-events (e.g. Tzanelli, 2015), much less attention has been given to how, or the extent to which, the underlying imaginaries actually 'travel' (mobilities of imaginaries); the ways in which they are received or consumed; the reactions that are developed in response to them (counter-imaginaries); and the effects of their reception or consumption at a distance. Empowered by imagined vistas of mass-mediated master narratives, imaginaries have become truly global. They are now sent, circulated, transferred, received, accumulated, converted and stored around the world. As Greg Urban argues, 'whatever is in motion tends to remain in motion unless something else stops it' (2001, p. 15). This is the case not only for imaginaries that are 'on the move' but also for other kinds of mobilities.

Mega-mobilities

Mega-events are characterised by their fleetingness – to the extent that some commentators have dubbed them to be a 'travelling circus'. As such, they can be considered as paragons of a hypermobile world. As a concept, mobility captures the common impression that one's life-world is in flux, with not only people but also cultures, objects, capital, businesses, services, diseases, media, images, information and ideas circulating across (and even beyond) the planet. The academic interest in mobility goes hand in hand with theoretical approaches that reject sedentism in favour of a 'nomadic metaphysics' (Cresswell, 2006) and empirical studies on the most diverse kinds of mobilities (Adey et al., 2013). The way the term is being used, mobility entails, in its coinage, much more than mere physical motion. Rather, it is seen as movement infused with both self-ascribed and attributed meanings (Frello, 2008). Importantly, mobility means different things to different people in differing social circumstances (Adey, 2010).

The currently dominant discourse across the globe links mobility to three positively valued characteristics: (1) the ability to move; (2) the ease or freedom of movement; and (3) the tendency to change easily or quickly (Salazar, 2010b; Salazar & Glick Schiller, 2014; Salazar & Smart, 2011). Mobility – a complex assemblage of movement, imaginaries and experience – is not only an object of study but also an analytical lens, promoted among others by those who talk about a 'mobility turn' in social theory and who have proposed a 'new mobilities paradigm' to reorient the ways in which we think about society. This 'mobility turn' indicates a perceived transformation of the social sciences in response to the increasing importance of various forms of movement (Urry, 2000, 2007).

The 'new mobilities paradigm', then, incorporates new ways of theorising how people, objects and ideas move around by looking at social phenomena through the lens of movement (Hannam et al., 2006).

Regardless of whether one agrees with the new mobilities paradigm, it is very productive to look at mega-events from a mobilities perspective (cf. Tzanelli, 2015). The mobility of events themselves is 'partly enforced by the outside by global rankings and standards organizations' (Müller & Pickles, 2015, p. 125). But who or what travels with 'the circus'? One immediately thinks of what is visible to the public eye during the event: the performers (athletes but also artists),[11] support crews and equipment (of all kinds), officials (e.g. from IOC or FIFA), sponsors and promotional materials, and spectators. However, the mobilities related to mega-events actually commence at a much earlier stage. The dream (or the nightmare, when things go wrong) of hosting is heavily fuelled by the circulating (mediatised) images and imaginaries of previous editions.

At the stage of conception, mega-events are accompanied by an entire 'policy mobilities industry' by which models are learned from one setting and deployed in others (Lauermann, 2014), through the mediation by bureaucrats, consultants and activists (Timms, this volume).[12] Policies are not simply transferred; rather, they are continuously transformed and mutated by a myriad of people and institutions (Peck, 2011). Indeed, 'whatever new knowledge is transferred and acquired, is taken apart, reworked, adapted and implemented in new, sometimes haphazard and often unpredictable ways' (Müller & Pickles, 2015, p. 125). As a result, the outcomes are rarely the same in the cities across which policies and knowledge are moved (Lauermann, this volume). This points to the crucial importance of (local) context (Timms, this volume). Müller (2015a) proposes a tripartite framework of 'transportation, transformation and translation' to conceptualise the circulation, mutation and impacts of mobile policies as translocal, socio-material networks. His framework, which could also be applied to other mobile aspects of mega-events (e.g. media coverage), highlights transformation and multiple immobilities or partial mobilities as an inevitable part of circulation (cf. Urban, 2001).

The mobility of professionals is an important factor in the transmission of knowledge (Lauermann, 2014). This is not different with mega-events (Horne & Manzenreiter, this volume). After all, 'the same consultants work on the bid books, the same people work for the organizing committees' (Müller & Pickles, 2015, p. 125). In the case of the Olympic Games, it is the International Olympic Committee (IOC) workshops that act as an important hub for the circulation of knowledge (Müller, 2014). These workshops are conducted by IOC-approved experts, who have operational experience with multiple previous Games. Because the IOC cannot meet the demand for developing solutions and operational expertise, 'hiring consulting experts on a temporary basis or permanent staff members with previous Games experience is therefore a common practice' (Müller, 2014, p. 333).

The small group of so-called Olympic gypsies (Müller, 2014) – people who work in several editions of the Olympic Games – often maintain close contact, either face to face (if working in the same location) or through new information

and communication technologies. Such Olympic 'nomads' will typically have worked in the same organising committee at some point in the past, which allowed them to develop personal trust, and then maintained loose ties (Müller, 2014). Flexibility and a spirit of adventure are essential qualities for those who want to try the 'Olympic gypsy' lifestyle. The overlapping career trajectories of these individuals can be powerful conduits for facilitating the mobility of knowledge, by moving from event to event and among the complex of public and private institutions involved in mega-events. Thomas Carter (this volume) discusses how the mobility of the highly skilled 'constructors' of mega-events is a form of (highly valuable) capital that they themselves work hard to produce.

In terms of (temporary) job creation, mega-events are a seasonal sector marked by a transient workforce (Horne & Manzenreiter, this volume). Experience in security or transport requirements, press operations, accommodation and catering, cleaning and waste management can all be valuable. Temporary employees often need to adopt a flexible lifestyle that requires long and non-standard working hours, synchronised to the needs of the event (Brown et al., 2013, p. 266). The division of labour for mega-events is not always equitable, and may tend to favour groups who are already in a stronger socio-economic position (Carter, this volume). Nevertheless, the idealised models one find most often in bid books presume that only citizens, not migrant workers or contractors, will engage in new employment opportunities, as well as that hotels and other attractions are owned by domestic companies. Particularly in developing or emerging economies, the reality on the ground is often radically different (and this points to the danger involved in applying one standardised model without adapting it to local particularities) (Konrad-Adenauer-Stiftung, 2011).

Another type of mobility that is produced by mega-events is displacement (Gellert & Lynch, 2003). Mega-events that involve substantial infrastructure development (as most in theory do) may have a considerable impact on real estate values (Evans, 2015), particularly with respect to their tendency to displace and evict groups of citizens living in poorer areas (Kim Davis, 2010), leading to processes of gentrification. This goes almost unreported publicly as it is considered either unimportant or the unfortunate but necessary by-product of the urban (re)development needed to make a successful event (Porter, 2009). The explanation for why a broad scale of (urban) changes is undertaken to prepare for an event appears partly due to 'event-related abbreviated political approval processes and accelerated financing mechanisms, making large urban infrastructure projects attractive' (Kim Davis, 2010, p. 2). As such, mega-events inscribe themselves perfectly well in broader ideologies related to mobility (see earlier). As assemblages of various mobilities, they are clearly linked to ideas of (expected) change. Much of these changes have been conceptualised in terms of 'legacies'.

(Im)mobile legacies

Although mega-events are commonly treated as short-lived 'ephemeral vistas' (Greenhalgh, 1988), they have not only economic consequences but also lasting

physical (spatial) and environmental, sociocultural, psychological and political 'legacies' (Hiller, this volume; Girginov, this volume). John Horne (2007, p. 86) calls legacies the 'known unknowns' of mega-events. In general, a legacy refers to something inherited or left behind. In the context of mega-events, there are many definitions circulating (Chappelet, 2012; Thomson et al., 2013). Often used interchangeably with 'impact' (which sounds more negative), legacies can be positive or negative, intended or unintended, tangible or intangible, costly or inexpensive, planned or unplanned, territorial or personal, short- or long-term and popular or unpopular. Girginov (this volume, 2012) prefers the term 'leveraging', an approach that views mega-events as a resource, which can be levered to achieve outcomes which would not have happened automatically by staging an event.

Each mega-event carries the heritage of past events. Within the Olympic Movement, legacy has become institutionalised (Leopkey & Parent, 2012; Mangan & Dyreson, 2013). Rule 2, Article 14 of the Olympic Charter states that an important role of the IOC is 'to promote a positive legacy from the Olympic Games to the host cities and host countries'.[13] All cities bidding to host the Olympics after 2012 are required to describe sports and non-sports legacies in their bid books. Much of the literature has focused on tangible legacies, either the economic effects or the infrastructural changes and the built environment (Grix, 2014; Preuss, 2015).[14]

Much of what is being 'built' in the context of mega-events concerns infrastructure, general infrastructures (transportation, utilities, environment, telecommunications) but also more specific ones, such as accommodation and special facilities (e.g. venues and technologies for sports). Infrastructures can be defined as 'the systems that enable circulation of goods, knowledge, meaning, people and power' (Lockrem & Lugo, 2012). While most people associate infrastructure with immobility, many mega-event structures are somehow temporary. They are given another function (after having been modified), are simply dismantled or are relocated elsewhere (even overseas) after the event closes.

Legacy essentially is 'a dream to be pursued rather than a certainty to be achieved' (Chappelet, 2012, p. 76). That legacy aims and objectives themselves are mobile was observed by Gammon, who describes them as 'moveable feasts rather than fixed directives' (2015, p. 447). Mega-events fit very well with consumption-based development strategies (Horne, 2015). The so-called legacy mantra (Tomlinson, 2014, p. 140) includes (false) promises – to increase the city's transnational profile, attract investments, promote tourism and create jobs that cannot all materialise. Defined as prestige schemes involving large-scale and high-risk investment over a lengthy period, mega-projects notoriously suffer heavy cost overruns, often fail to deliver the supposed benefits and regularly provoke financial crises (Flyvbjerg et al., 2003). Nearly every global mega-event has resulted in financial losses for the host, temporary cessation of democratic processes, the production of militarised and exclusionary spaces, residential displacement and environmental degradation (Lenskyj, 2008). No wonder protests and campaigns are becoming stronger and stronger (Timms, 2012).

Importantly, legacies affect various stakeholders differently (Preuss, 2015). Unlike in the case of official sponsors, there is no negotiation or a contract with the

public, which has to cover the cost of a privately held event (Hiller, this volume). The arguments for public subsidies are based largely on (expected) social benefits (Todt, 2014). Controversies surrounding the social justice aspects of events-related policies have become more prevalent in recent years (Finkel, 2015). Despite systematic efforts to refashion the planning processes and imaginaries surrounding mega-projects as vehicles for the realisation of broad social, economic and environmental benefit, community resistance and opposition to mega-projects remain common, challenging their viability and approval (Hayes & Karamichas, 2011). This is largely because the real legacy of mega-events is often one of high levels of debt, redundant buildings and a community that has been displaced or bypassed. However, as mega-events remain high-profile events that generate international publicity, the host city often considers the prestige to outweigh other considerations (Girginov, this volume). In this context, Müller (2015b) talks about a 'mega-event syndrome', a group of symptoms that occur together and afflict mega-event planning, including overpromising benefits, underestimating costs, rewriting urban planning priorities to fit the event, using public resources for private interest and suspending the regular rule of law.

Mega-events on the move

Despite all of the attention given to mobility over recent decades (Adey et al., 2013), some are of the opinion that 'there is still a general failure, especially in the social sciences, to reflect on the meaning of mobility' (Papastergiadis, 2010, p. 347). As this edited volume convincingly shows, the study of mega-events (and, by extension, mega-projects) offers exciting possibilities in this respect. Not only are mega-events themselves highly mobile phenomena, but also they involve large-scale mobilities of people, capital, services, images, information, policies and so forth. Analysing them from a mobility perspective reveals interesting tensions between mobilities and immobilities. At the heart of mega-events lies an important connection between imaginaries and (infra)structures (and, interestingly, both contain elements of mobility and immobility). So, in a double move, the mobilities lens applied in this book enables us to better grasp what is at stake in mega-events, particularly in relation to issues of labour, imaginaries, policies and legacies, and to fine-tune our methodological toolbox to study (im)mobility in general.

Notes

1 Think of listings that include measurements such as liveability (e.g. Monocle's 'Most Liveable Cities Index', the Economist Intelligence Unit's 'Liveability Ranking and Overview' and the 'Mercer Quality of Living Survey'), cultural interaction (e.g. the 'Global Power City Index') or the ability to attract talent and visitors (e.g. the 'Global City Competitiveness Index').
2 Although image is thought of as somewhat transient and context-dependent, reputation is seen as something more long-lasting and consensual or transcendent. The construct of reputation refers to 'the aggregate of the impressions that external stakeholders have and, furthermore, as an accumulation of these images over an extended time' (Parent & Foreman, 2007, p. 17).

3 Historically, these two types of mega-events (cultural and sports) were mixed. The second Olympic Games, for instance, were held in 1900 in Paris as part of the Exposition Universelle, while the 1904 Olympiad was an appendage to the St. Louis World's Fair. One could also argue that the ceremonies organised around the competitions during global sports mega-events, in particular the opening ceremony, are to a large extent cultural showcases.
4 Robert Govers and Frank Go (2009) explain that any type of place branding is a representation of identity, building a positive image, both for those who deliver the experience and for spectators. This is expected to lead to brand satisfaction and loyalty, name awareness, perceived quality and favourable associations.
5 Soft power in general refers to 'culture and values of political or social entities that their representatives can efficiently employ to pursue their interests in outward relationships or to alter the attitudes and behaviour of other actors' (Manzenreiter, 2010, p. 30).
6 An event in general can be described as 'a singularity of forces in which critical dimensions of socio-cultural existence reveal new potentials of the ongoing formation of socio-cultural realities' (Kapferer, 2015, p. 2).
7 In its limited sense, 'spectacle' refers to the mass media. The spectacle is the unified, ever-increasing mass of image-objects and commoditised experience.
8 Imagineering, a concept originally developed by the Walt Disney Company (Imagineers, 1996), denotes the combination of creative imagination and technological engineering in the 'theming' of goods, services and places. Depending on the theme, the images, imaginaries and representations that are manipulated to construct and enact peoples and places differ (e.g. Salazar, 2010a).
9 Exposure is a very adequate term here, because it refers both to the short-lived but intense attention a mega-event receives in global media (cf. the lens of a camera) and to the fact that those engaged in mega-events have not much protection in case something goes wrong (e.g. financial losses).
10 By their very nature, imaginaries remain intangible, so the only way to study them is by focusing on the multiple conduits through which they pass and become visible in the form of images and discourses (Salazar, 2012).
11 On the mobility of sportspeople, see the work of Thomas Carter (2011).
12 Policy mobility has three core elements: involved actors, policy objects and the mobilisation process (Silvestre, 2013). The models that acquire greater mobility are those that extend dominant ideologies and consolidate powerful interests (Giulianotti et al., 2015). The literature on policy mobility illustrates the political economies, local-global networks and policy assemblages that enable the diffusion of specific policy prescriptions around the world (McCann & Ward, 2011).
13 John MacAloon has provided 'a partial ethnography of legacy speech in Olympic circles . . . of talk about what the Olympic Games bring and leave behind' and links this to the 'penetration of managerial rationality into Olympic affairs' (2008, p. 2061). He shows the historical shift from a concern with 'brand' to a preoccupation with 'legacy'.
14 Only during the last decade, sociocultural, environmental and political dimensions were added (Preuss, 2007). Intangible legacies include the reputation and image (global awareness), the memories related to the experience, but also things such as knowledge, education and skills training.

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